

REGULAR MEETING – MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
March 9, 2015

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson called the regular meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber of the Audrey P. Beck Building.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Kegler, Kochenburger, Marcellino, Moran, Paterson, Raymond, Ryan, Shapiro, Wassmundt

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Shapiro moved and Mr. Ryan seconded to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2015 special meeting as presented. The motion passed with all in favor except Kegler, Marcellino and Paterson who abstained. Ms. Moran moved and Mr. Shapiro seconded to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2015 regular meeting, as amended. The motion passed with all in favor except Marcellino and Paterson who abstained.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Claire Hart, Sylvia Halbrooks, Eleanor Martin, Sarah Bober, and Simonne Thibeault, students from Southeast School, addressed the Council asking for help in getting the word out that the monarch butterfly population is declining and suggested ways in which people can mitigate that decline.

Rochelle Strimple, resident and Southeast School staff member, noted the work of fellow staff members Diane Hutton and Lisa Cackowski who have worked with the girls on this project. Ms. Strimple commented that they exemplify the wonderful teachers in Mansfield.

Julia Delapp, Lynwood Road and Fundraising Chair for the Playground Committee, spoke to the importance of the project as a place for families of all levels of ability to meet and interact. Ms. Delapp commented that there is tremendous support in the community for the project and thanked the Council for their time and feedback.

Jeff Smithson, Samuel Lane, declared himself to be a proponent of play describing it as a powerful tool for a community. Mr. Smithson asked the Council to allocate the necessary funds.

Sam, a third-grader at Goodwin School, expressed his support for the playground because it will be accessible for all and will be good for all ages, allowing him and his sister to play at the same location. Sam is looking forward to enjoying the playground soon.

Lyndzy Passmore, Middle Turnpike and Mansfield Middle School student, commented that the playground will be a good way for children to get the exercise they need in a safe environment.

Ellen Tulman, Ball Hill Road and an original member of the Playground Committee, read a letter into the record from Pallas Wong. Ms. Wong is the mother of a child in a wheelchair and is looking forward to a place where both of her children can play. (Statement attached)

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Shayne Anderson and daughter Erin, Ellise Road, asked the Council to provide the funds needed for the playground. Mr. Anderson commented that the entire process of building this playground is a lesson in positive civic engagement.

Paige Passmore, a Mansfield resident, recently heard about the playground and agrees that it would be an achievement for Mansfield as the Town needs more places for youngsters to enjoy activities.

Brendan Franz, Minnesota Road, reported that last year he, at the suggestion of his art teacher, volunteered to do some work for the playground project making handprint tiles. Mr. Franz commented on the importance of having a place to get exercise in this area of Town.

Kelly Zimmerman, member of the Committee and Blake Lane resident, spoke to the importance of establishing a build date and noted the Committee is exploring ways to involve every child in Town in the project. Ms. Zimmerman noted the fundraising efforts of the Committee have been extensive.

Cristina Colon-Semenza, Woods Road, reviewed some of the literature on exercise, pediatrics and children's health which provides evidence of the physical and social health benefits of a multifaceted approach to activities like playgrounds.

Margaret Ferron, Gurleyville Road, thanked the Town Council members for meeting with playground advocates this week and addressed a number of misconceptions regarding the history of this Parks and Recreation project, the amount of money raised by the Committee, the inclusion of children in the design and fundraising aspects of the project, the current scope of the project and the chosen site. Ms. Ferron thanked staff members Sara Anderson, Pat Schneider and Curt Vincente for their enthusiasm and diligence. She also thanked the Ossen Foundation, State Representative Gregg Haddad and Council members.

Ric Hossack, Middle Turnpike, questioned how many of those present have to use the bus to get to the playground and objected to the cost, but asked the Council to provide the money. Mr. Hossack commended Mr. Hart for his presentation to the legislature regarding the Municipal Employee Retirement System (MERS), called for the resignation of the Finance Director and requested a meeting on shared services.

Drew, who lives on Middle Turnpike, requested the Council provide the money for the project for people who do not have access to playgrounds.

David Freudmann, Eastwood Road, commented that there seems to be a lot of support from people when they want the government to spend money and lamented that the same is not true when the issue is staying within our means. Playgrounds are important but not essential. Mr. Freudmann urged the Council to direct the Town Manager to send a letter to E.O. Smith stating that an increase in their budget is unacceptable and urged people to vote no on the Region 19 budget. He commended Mr. Hart on the letters regarding MERS.

Arthur Smith, Mulberry Road, spoke to how choices are made and urged a Parks and Recreation Master Plan be developed prior to authorizing the playground. (Statement attached).

Brian Coleman, Centre Street, applauded the program at Southeast School noting that he read an article on how genetically modified food affects monarch butterflies and urged sparing use of pesticides. Mr. Coleman commented on the high price of housing in Storrs Center and civility at meetings.

Charles Naumec, Riverview Road, stated the Town and State have two high priority issues to deal with – the resident state trooper program and PILOT funding. Mr. Naumec also asked the Town to address Election Day Registration for local elections. He does not believe it is proper to allow students, who have no financial obligation, to vote on Town financial issues and suggested the University institute a residency fee for students who live on campus.

Miles Anderson spoke in support of the playground and asked that the Council consider that the Town will be getting a \$500,000 playground for a \$100,000 investment.

Jason Anderson, Ellise Road, is looking forward to playing at the new playground and meeting new people.

Asher Anderson, Ellise Road, reported that he has helped raise funds for the playground by asking for donations for his birthday but that there is still not enough money to build the playground.

Ben Wiles, Browns Road, commented on how remarkable it is to see so many people in attendance but lamented the fact that the Council would not have to be dealing with this issue if the STEAP grant had been approved. Mr. Wiles also expressed, given the reporting on the 50th anniversary of the civil rights march in Selma, disappointment in an earlier public comment which suggested disenfranchising a large group of voters in our Town.

IV. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

In addition to his written report the Town Manager offered the following comments:

- Mr. Hart requested that a letter he received from department heads expressing concerns about behaviors at Council meetings be added to a future agenda for discussion. Mr. Hart requested the letter become part of the record. (Letter attached)
- Mr. Hart requested feedback on including the Council's discussion on Mansfield Tomorrow as part of the regular March 23, 2015 meeting.
- Mr. Hart reminded members of a UConn scoping meeting on a variety of projects in the South Campus area which will be held on March 11, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in Room 146 of the Bishop Center. This meeting will only discuss projects that have been previously addressed and that have plans underway. The location of the hockey rink will not be discussed at this meeting.

Mr. Ryan requested that the letter from the department heads be added as an agenda item in the near future.

Ms. Wassmundt asked that specific behaviors be identified in the discussion of the letter from employees and that she be allowed to explain some of the situations she has encountered. Ms. Wassmundt commented on remarks made by Council members at the last meeting, which she called derogatory and demeaning.

Mr. Shapiro raised a point of order as the subject was not on the agenda nor was it responsive to the Town Manager's report.

The Mayor upheld the point of order.

V. REPORTS AND COMMENTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ms. Wassmundt commented on issues brought up regarding the Finance Director and the request for her resignation. Ms. Wassmundt referred to the Town's Annual Report and comments made by a MBA in Finance regarding that Report.

Mr. Ryan, Chair of the Finance Committee, commented that the mistake to which Ms. Wassmundt referred was discovered by the Town after the books were closed and corrected. Mr. Ryan reiterated that the Town received an "unmodified opinion" from the auditors which means that no mistakes were made.

Mr. Shapiro stated that any comments made by him at the last meeting had no hidden meaning.

Mr. Shapiro moved to switch Item 1, Storrs Center Update, with Item 2, Community Playground Update. Seconded by Ms. Moran the motion passed unanimously.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Storrs Center Update
No report offered.

2. Community Playground Update

Mr. Ryan moved and Ms. Moran seconded to appropriate \$132,070 from unappropriated FY 14/15 state revenue, with the understanding that any additional fundraising or cost savings would ultimately decrease this liability.

Council members discussed the budget with Parks and Recreation Director Curt Vincente and Early Childhood Coordinator Sara Anderson.

Mr. Kegler moved and Ms. Wassmundt seconded to amend the motion by substituting the following: Appropriate \$92,070 from current unappropriated FY 14/15 state revenue and budget \$40,000 in next fiscal year's CIP, which is currently listed for future playground project reserves.

Councilors discussed the pro and cons of appropriating the funds from this year's budget or splitting the appropriation between this fiscal year and next fiscal year.

The motion to amend failed with Kegler, Raymond and Wassmundt in favor and Kochenburger, Marcellino, Moran, Paterson, Ryan, and Shapiro opposed.

Ms. Wassmundt moved and Ms. Raymond seconded to amend the motion by adding that the Town's Purchasing Ordinance must be compiled with for all materials and professional services.

The motion to amend failed with Kegler, Raymond, Shapiro and Wassmundt in favor and Kochenburger, Marcellino, Moran, Paterson, and Ryan opposed.

Ellen Tulman, Special Needs Coordinator for the Playground, at the request of the Council, commented on the various components of the playground which provide numerous features for a variety of children based on input from parents and professionals who work with children with a wide range of needs.

The original motion passed unanimously.

The Council offered their thanks to Eileen Ossen of the Jeffrey P. Ossen Family Foundation, for her donation to the project.

3. Community Water and Wastewater

The Town Manager remarked on the following:

- A Public Scoping Meeting for the Four Corners Project will be held on March 18, 2015 in the Council Chamber. The doors will open at 6:00 p.m. with the session beginning at 7:00 p.m.
- A public hearing on water diversion permit application of the Connecticut Water Company and the University of Connecticut will be held on March 25, 2015 in the Council Chamber. The doors will open at 5:30 p.m. with the hearing beginning at 6:00 p.m.
- A Mansfield/UConn Wastewater Agreement will be needed for the Four Corners Project and the Town's existing sewer and water service agreement with UConn will need to be updated. The Storrs Center pump station will be included in the agreement. Director of Public Works John Carrington addressed questions on the path of the Four Corners sewer line. The engineering drawings will be available at the next Four Corners Water and Sewer Advisory Committee Meeting.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

4. Department of Human Services Update

Director of Human Services Patricia Schneider described some of the services which are provided to the clientele the department serves.

5. Boundary Line Agreement – Bradley-Buchanan Property

Mr. Shapiro moved and Ms. Raymond seconded, effective March 9, 2015, to authorize the Town Manager to execute the boundary line agreement with Joshua's Trust to establish the boundary between the Trust's Bradley-Buchanan property and the Town's Buchanan Center Library property at 54 Warrenville Road. The motion passed unanimously.

6. UConn South Campus Development

Mr. Kochenburger moved and Mr. Ryan seconded to authorize the Mayor to co-sign a letter to the University of Connecticut with the Chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the South Campus Development scoping process. Such letter shall address the issues identified in the memo from Town Manager Hart dated March 9, 2015 as well as any additional comments identified by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Motion passed unanimously.

7. Interlocal Agreement – Boundary Line Survey with Chaplin

Mr. Ryan moved and Ms. Moran seconded effective March 9, 2015, to authorize the Town Manager to execute the attached Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Chaplin to jointly commission a survey of the common boundary line between the two towns.

Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

No comments offered.

IX. DEPARTMENTAL AND COMMITTEE REQUESTS

No reports offered.

X. PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

8. Community Playground Letters
9. T. Luciano (2/23/15)
10. C. Naumec (2/27/15)
11. Mansfield Self & RV Storage (2/26/15)
12. Sustainability Committee – 2/18/15 Minutes
13. M. Hart re Connecticut Municipal Employees Retirement System (CMERS)
14. M. Hart re House Bill No. 6824
15. M. Hart re House Bill No. 6931
16. R. Leclerc re Superintendent's Proposed Budget
17. State Project No. 32-148: Replacement of Bridge over Willimantic River

XI. FUTURE AGENDAS

Ms. Wassmundt requested a discussion of the PILOT program and the guidelines used when varying the formulae be added to a future agenda. Ms. Moran suggested the Council wait until Econsult Solutions provides their report as this is one of the items they will be reviewing. The Town Manager will review how the program is supposed to work.

Ms. Wassmundt requested the issue of how the Town Council and Town Manager respond to questions from the public be added to an agenda.

Mr. Shapiro moved and Ms. Moran seconded to move into executive session to discuss the sale or purchase of real property, in accordance with CGS§1-200(6)(D) and to include the Town Manager in the discussion
Motion passed unanimously.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Sale or purchase of real property, in accordance with CGS§1-200(6)(D)
Present: Kegler, Kochenburger, Marcellino, Moran, Paterson, Raymond, Ryan, Shapiro, Wassmundt
Also included: Town Manager Matt Hart

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The Council reconvened in regular session. Ms. Raymond moved and Mr. Shapiro seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10:43 p.m.
The motion passed unanimously.

Elizabeth C. Paterson, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk

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